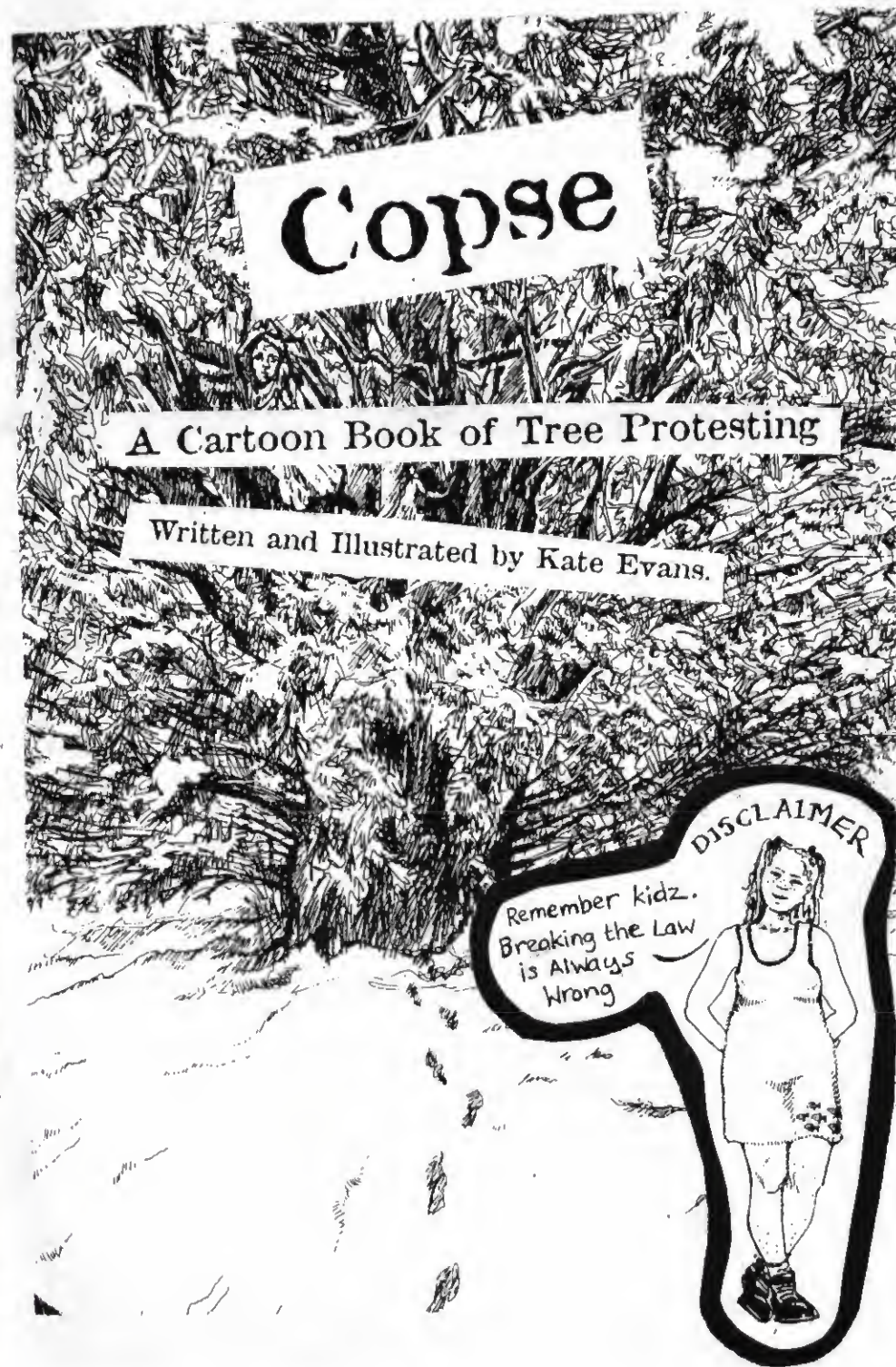




Black Cat Distro, P.O. Box 229,
Roberts Creek, B.C. V0N 2W0 Canada
blackcat@resist.ca



This guide to the specific details of tree protesting tactics and methods is extracted from a larger book which is also titled Copse. Written by Kate Evans and many others, that book tells stories of the anti-road movement in Britain through essays, interviews, photos, and Kate's incredible cartoons. Sadly, it is currently out of print. The folks at AK Press (www.akpress.org) distributed it, and they may again if and when it's resurrected. Until then, this excerpt is a useful tool for anyone interested in getting to know trees a little better. There is no copyright on it as long as any profits made from its sale will go towards groups involved with ecological preservation and social justice.

I first encountered the original whole book entitled Copse at the Faslane Anti-Nuclear Peace Camp in Scotland (www.faslanepeacecamp.org). It was the camp's 19th birthday, and the celebrations included a week of workshops and actions. During a class on tree-climbing, Copse was brought out as a reference for tying the alpine butterfly knot used in rope walkways. Afterwards, I tried to borrow the book, but its owner had already left, taking it with them. Luckily, a year later a friend from England came to visit, and she left a copy of Copse with me for a good couple months as she found herself a home in the

United States. By the time she asked me to mail it to her, I'd read and re-read it, and compiled these pages.

With the help of the kind folks at Black Cat Distro, my goal is to give a wider audience tools for direct action. Please note that I'm recommending this excerpt as a guide to use as a reference when learning these skills from an experienced climber; a fall can be deadly no matter your skill level, so use caution and triple-check your knots. Stay free!

DISCLAIMER



It's always
breaking the law
to help kids.



A. Tessa

ads of petitioning, got a theatre group involved and did village fete thing. There wasn't a massive turn out, but I don't think there needed to be because we'd put an effort in. We'd involved the local community and we'd liked about Agenda 21. We got a connection with some women from West Papua and the Philippines who are under threat from RTZ and we got them to come to Ystradgynlais. We got a hall and about 30 people turned up and the women there met the women from West Papua, and they all had the same story. Other than the fact that the people from Indonesia are under threat from armed soldiers.

Celtic Energy went along as well and tried to stop us sitting into the public enquiry. There were lots of huge peace workers there too, but fortunately Di John was there and he's one of the hardest men in the Welsh valleys and he's on our side. We went in the bar. He said, "You coming for a drink?" and we went in the bar with the Welsh peace workers and managed to have good chat with them really. Going, "Yeah, yeah, we may be doing scrounging scam, but we're happy scam." Because we'd set up a camp there was this huge threat of imminent direct action. We were like, "There'll be thousands of us" when there was only about 20. We did a banner drop on the roof of Llandrindod Wells Council - then after loads of unming and ahhing, they turned it down.

Celtic Energy has 71 more sites to develop. ONLY: [And] at Sellar there are places where there are arsh fritillary butterflies still there. I've seen them. There are pockets of deciduous woodland and other areas where butterflies still there in the open cast zone. It's not as yet, up there, no way.

Keaton on frames, the first Church: Sunday 1st April 1649



Council of State, 15th April 1649: "On Sunday evening last there was one Everard, once of the army but was cashiered, who termeth himself a prophet, one Steaver and Gaulton and two more, all living in Cobham, came to St George's hill in Surrey and began to dig on that side of the hill next to Camps Close, and sowed the ground with parsnips, carrots & beans..."



On Monday following they were there again, being increased in their number... On Friday last they came again, between twenty and thirty and wrought all day at digging... They did then intend to have two or three ploughs at work... They invite all to join them and promise them meat & drink & clothes.



It is feared they have some design in hand.

Tunnels

This is the latest development in the game. Great for people with vertigo; crap for those with claustrophobia. Tunnels are by nature defensive.

Taking into account soil types and water tables, you are free to construct your own mad warren, and keep digging it during the eviction to really take the piss. You get a great, fake 'tunnel fan' too.

The following information is nicked from Muppet Dave's *Direct Action Tunnelling - Lessons from Big Mama*. The full version is available from the Mobile Office Project.

Build round tunnels, curvy tunnels, zig-zaggy, sloping tunnels, little, tiny, narrow tunnels which are much smaller than big, burly bailiffs.

Build lots of doors out of concrete, steel plate, wood, barbed wire (on the outside) and everything else you can get your hands on. Doors are what will delay the bailiffs most: nail them shut in an eviction. Try putting lock-ons on the other side of them. Then try connecting the lock-ons to the shoring.

See why tunnels are difficult to evict?

The secret tunnel at Claremont Road was different. It was designed to withstand being driven over by machinery and was made from metal brewers kegs welded together.

Have lots of food, water and extra empty piss bottles and poo bags. Books, board games, blim, squeaky toys...

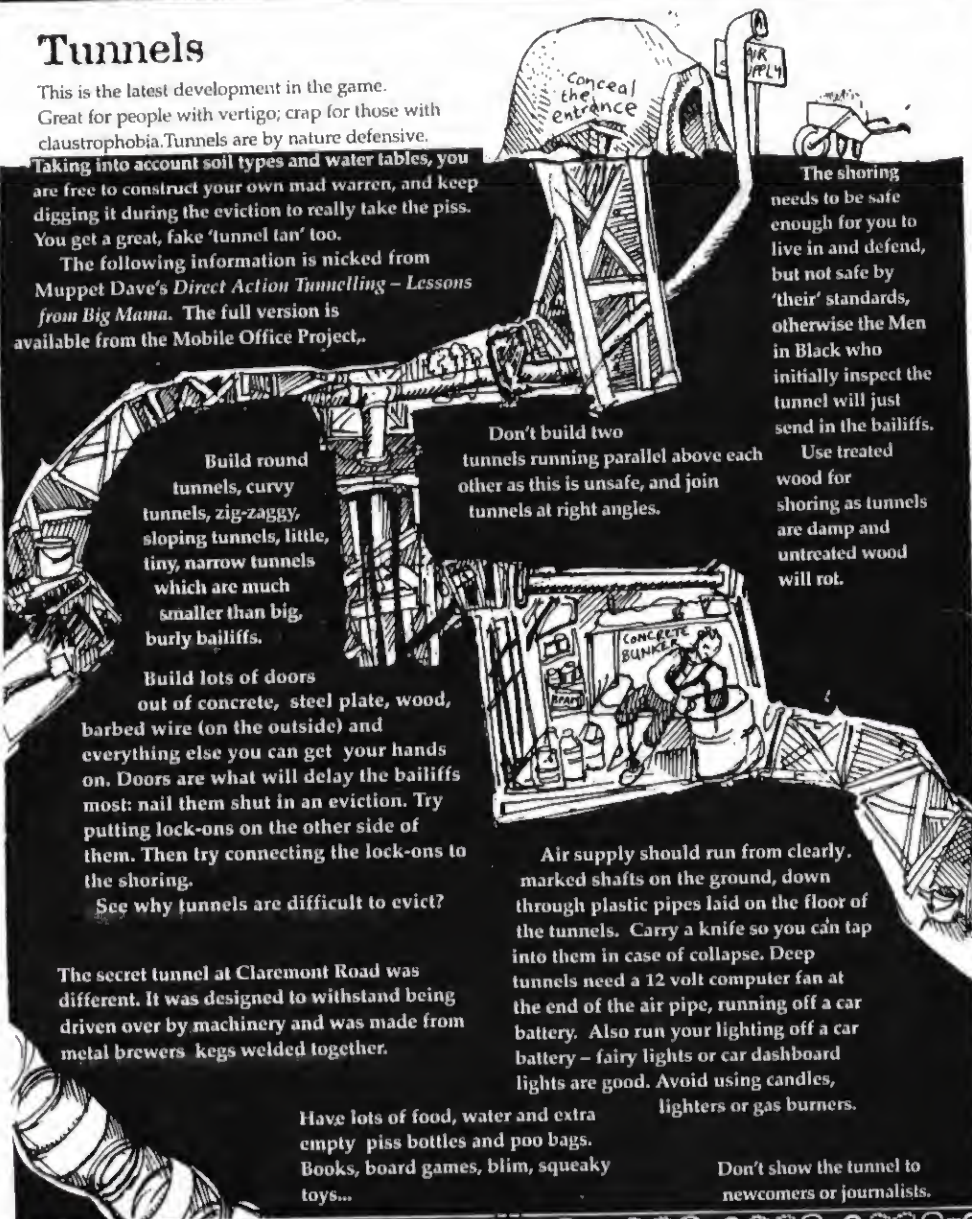
Don't build two tunnels running parallel above each other as this is unsafe, and join tunnels at right angles.

Air supply should run from clearly marked shafts on the ground, down through plastic pipes laid on the floor of the tunnels. Carry a knife so you can tap into them in case of collapse. Deep tunnels need a 12 volt computer fan at the end of the air pipe, running off a car battery. Also run your lighting off a car battery - fairy lights or car dashboard lights are good. Avoid using candles, lighters or gas burners.

Don't show the tunnel to newcomers or journalists.

The shoring needs to be safe enough for you to live in and defend, but not safe by 'their' standards, otherwise the Men in Black who initially inspect the tunnel will just send in the bailiffs.

Use treated wood for shoring as tunnels are damp and untreated wood will rot.



A Beginner's Guide to Tree Protesting

You will need:

- A desire to protect the environment.
- An identified area of land that is about to be trashed.
- Some other enthusiastic people.

Everything else just turns up. Honestly.

However, a copy of *Road Rage*, available from Road Alert, is very useful as it is packed with more detailed practical and legal information than is included here (see Further Reading section at the end of this book). Also, try to befriend someone with a Transit-type van to help transport people and tat.

The 'success' of a campaign depends in part on who is attempting to trash the land. The Department of Transport will always eventually get the work done, even if it has to bring in the army and arrest every citizen in the area, but a local council may prove more sensitive to public opinion. One notable success was the camp in Windsor Great Park which embarrassed Prince Philip (the then president of the World Wide Fund for Nature) into not felling a stand of 300 year old oak trees.

It also depends upon who is protesting, and when. When local, ordinary people lead the campaign it is more likely to be effective, as the police and judiciary might just respect their right to protest. When a camp is established before all

legal channels have been exhausted, the threat of direct action may be enough to persuade the decision makers to be sensible and responsible, for once.

Another measure of perceived success is the amount of media attention a protest receives. Have a decent office nearby with telephone, computer and fax. Learn how to do press releases, do lots of wacky stunts for the media, and try to be in England, near London, or you'll never get nationwide media coverage. Or alternatively, don't bother. Protesting is about doing what you want to do, for yourself. If you want to do what a news editor wants, go and be a journalist.

YOU WON'T WIN, YOU KNOW

Ultimately questions about whether protest camps win or not are irrelevant. They are about people joining together in a celebration of the beautiful places that are left on this earth.

They are about letting people be strong together, where singly they are weak.

They are about helping people discover a new way and rhythm of living in harmony with the planet.

In all these things protest camps win.

Besides which, if we lose, that is, the planet loses, then everyone loses.

BUT YOU WON'T STOP THE ROAD

Ah, yes. Well, although that does depend upon who is doing the building, experience has taught people that many roads probably will be built.

LUCY: The feeling isn't that we're going to stop the road, it's that maybe the act changes the world, and changing the world may stop all the roads.



The basic principle is to take residence of the land so the authorities have to take you to court to evict you. This works best in countries where squatting is a civil, not a criminal offence. Then when the time comes for the eviction, make it as difficult as possible by building lots of defences, and actively, non-violently resisting the bailiffs. Basically make lots of fuss and cost them lots of money and totally do everyone's heads in about the issue, especially your own.

LEGAL WARNING

(SECTION 6 CRIMINAL LAW ACT 1977)

TAKE NOTICE

THAT we live here, it is our home and we intend to stay here.
 THAT that all times there is at least one person here.
 THAT any entry without our permission is a **CRIMINAL OFFENCE** as any one of us who is in physical possession is opposed to any entry without their permission.
 THAT if you attempt to enter by violence or by threatening violence we **WILL PROSECUTE YOU**. You may receive a sentence of up to **SIX MONTHS IMPRISONMENT** and/or a **FINE** of up to **£2,000**.
 THAT if you want to get us out you will have to take out a summons for possession in the County Court or in the High Court, or produce a valid certificate in terms of Section 7, Criminal Law Act 1977.
 THAT it is an offence under Section 74(8) Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994) to knowingly make a false statement when signing the said certificate. A person guilty of such an offence may receive a sentence of up to **six months imprisonment** and/or a fine of up to **£2,000**.

Signed..... The Occupiers
 N.B. Signing this legal warning is optional. It is equally valid whether or not it is signed.

SQUAT THE LAND

Mark off the area of land that is to become your camp and put up Section 6 notices around the perimeter, like the one above.

If there are any buildings on the land, gain entry (without being arrested for criminal damage), change the locks and put up Section 6 notices in the window.

Right, this is now your home and as long as there is someone on site at all times, you cannot be evicted until you have been taken to court and a possession order granted (except in the case of Interim Possession Orders served against people squatting buildings under the Criminal Justice Act; contact squatters advisory groups for further details).

Well, you shouldn't be evicted:

ROY: I've been in the smallest eviction in the world. Clinderpath Woods on the M65. Me and Gareth got carried out by security guards. They turned round with a video camera when they'd chucked us out and said, "Sorry, you weren't here". There was one copper, 60 security guards and me and Gareth being carried out. Crap.

PUBLICISE THE PROTEST

Get an office with fax, phone, computer. Assume this phone is tapped. Get a bank account. Get the numbers of local and national media, chat up journalists and do press releases. Have open days on site, tea parties and kids fun days.

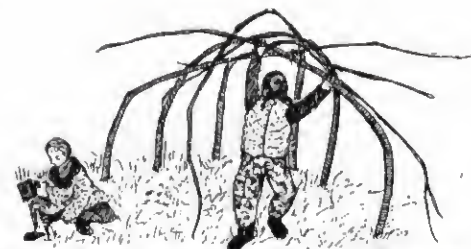
Sit around in the office when it's raining and get pissed and laugh at GCHQ having to listen to all the bollox you talk.

How to Build a Bender:

You can live in tents, if you like, but benders are warmer and more substantial.

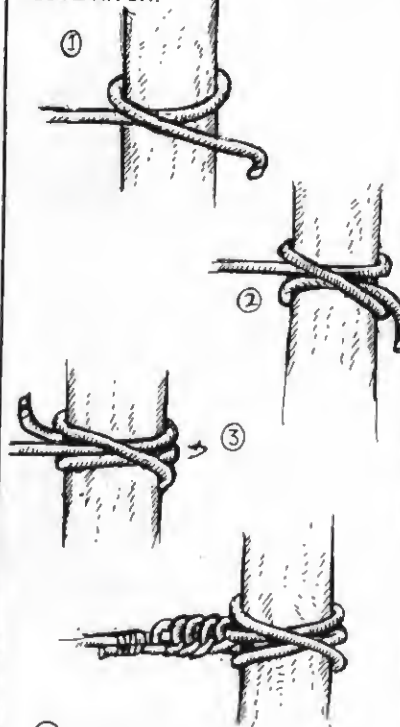


Cut young, bendy coppice poles, preferably hazel or willow. Many old woods have stands of neglected coppice in them. Bender poles are best cut in winter, when the sap is down, as this does not damage the tree. Angle the cut outwards, so that rain isn't diverted into the centre of the coppice.



4. Tie the other ends of the ropes onto the second tree with clove hitches, again about five feet apart. Make sure the ropes lie neatly together all the way around the trunk.

CLOVE HITCH:



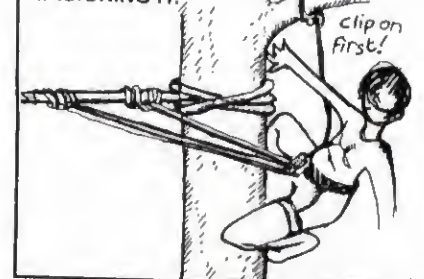
4 tension it, then finish off with a line of half-hitches.

5. Tensioning it: Your walkway will be wobbly and slack. Tension it by attaching your prusiks to the rope and to your harness and leaning/pulling back. Feed the excess through the knot. This is easier and more effective if one person pulls and the other tightens.

6. The end of the rope must now be tied back onto the walkway with a line of at least three half hitches. Tie them all in the same direction. Tape the ends of the rope together securely.

7. Walk along your walkway. If the ropes rub against branches at any point, fix strips of carpet around the branch with gaffer tape to prevent the rope fraying.

TENSIONING IT:



Steel cable walkways are more difficult for them to cut. They involve steel cable, a ratchet device for tensioning and U-bolts to fix it, otherwise the procedure is the same as above. Wrap carpet around the tree trunks so the cable doesn't dig into it, and when walking along cable walkways lift your carabiner up with your hand so the cable doesn't wear it away.

NETS

Nets such as big cargo nets were used to best effect at Claremont Road where they stopped the progression of the cherry pickers up the street for days. The cherry picker would move under the net and seize hold of someone to cut them out. Their partner would then stand over them so that they would then fall through the hole if the net was cut. Most of the time in tree evictions, though, nets get swamped with loads of bailiff climbers and everyone is hauled out.

There are plenty more amazingly unevitable combinations of all these defences that can be built, although the advent of tunnels has made tree villages less important these days. Remember, as far as tactics go, a site with limited cherry-picker access is most defensible; twenty people in fifty trees is much better than a hundred people in two trees, and three righteous, full-on, locally resident mothers are worth any amount of scuzzy, young hippies.

Walkways:

Although walking along two bits of rope sixty feet in the air looks like utter insanity the first time you see it, walkways are actually quite safe. Well, not particularly-unsafe anyway.

Provided that the rope doesn't break, and your harness is sound, then there is no way to fall off a walkway. A good way to overcome your fear is to get someone to check that your harness and cowstails are safe, then step out onto a walkway and jump off. Look, you really can't fall. You can wobble about a lot though.



Provided that the rope doesn't break... Use strong rope. Tie the correct knots. As the trees thrash about in the wind, the walkways will get slacker; don't continually re-tension them to tighten them, REPLACE THEM. In fact, spend all your time on environmental campaigns raising money for more polysteel rope.

Another precaution that makes walkways safer is to use two ropes, or a rope and a steel cable for the 'handrail'. Clip your cowstails onto different ropes.

A good thing to do when becoming familiar with walkways is to build one at ground level to practise going across. Then get lots of people to jump on it, re-tension it, jump on it, re-tension it. See if it breaks.

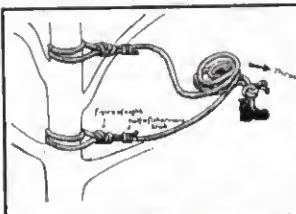
MAKING WALKWAYS

There are two ways of making walkways. This is the Clove Hitch method. The other is illustrated by D. Dahl in 'Road Raging'. Heated debates arise about which is safer, but all walkways are potentially unsafe. Check the ropes.

Making walkways is easier with two people, so you don't have to climb back down the tree if you drop the rope. You also need two 50 foot lengths of rope or twine to haul things up with, a knife, small bits of carpet and gaffer tape, and a lighter or some electrical tape.

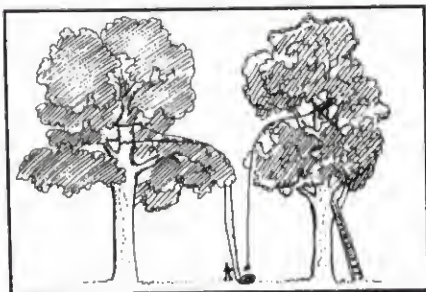


1. Suss the trees out from the ground and cut two lengths of polysteel rope a good bit longer than the distance between them.



2. Now climb one tree. Find a place where you can attach the two ropes about five feet apart, with a clear route through the branches to the

next tree. Tie the ropes on using the same method as for rigging up climbing ropes (p161). Coil up the ropes, weight the end with something (I always use my boot) then chuck them out of the tree in the direction the walkway is going. This is so they clear the lower branches and don't get all tangled up.



3. Take another length of rope or twine, climb the second tree, weight the end of it and throw it out. You will have no boots on by now. Get someone on the ground to tie the ropes on to your line.



Make some holes in the ground in a circle with a stake and mallet. The size of your bender depends upon the size of your tarpaulin. Put the fat ends of poles in them. Weave the centres together. Weave the other shoots through them in a basketry sort of way.

Tie a layer of blankets over the poles for extra insulation on winter benders. Now get your huge

canvas tarpaulin and drape it over the top. Make the doorway face down hill so the rain doesn't get in. Plastic sheeting can be used for kitchen benders or partially open rain shelters, but is no good for sleeping under as the condensation makes everything damp.

Dig up turves and lay them over the edges of the tarp for extra rain proofing.

Cover the floor with pallets or planks and carpet. Get a wood burner (small cheap ones can be welded out of gas bottles) and a length of flexible flue. Cut a large hole where the stack pipe comes out and fix a piece of aluminium sheeting around the flue. Light the burner regularly to drive out damp.

You can put a window in too if you like. Funky.

Communal benders rapidly become communal blenders, containing jumbled layers of every conceivable human possession. They have to be taken down and remade every few months to prevent them reaching the stage where it's safer to torch the whole thing.

BASIC CAMP THINGS

- You need a kitchen bender with cupboards and rat proof containers for storing food in. Don't let dogs in it. It's nice if it's big enough to cook in when it's raining.
- You need water butts for water, with lids on.
- Put lids back on everything else too.
- Everyone has to get the hang of doing their washing up after every meal, so someone has



① Squidge together self-raising flour and water until the dirt comes off your hands and the dough changes colour.

② Fry in lukewarm oil until partially browned and indigestable.

③ Don't add any flavourings. Eat. At least you don't feel hungry anymore.

④ In fact, you won't want to eat anything for a very long time.



to tell everyone to get the hang of doing their washing up after every meal.

MELSKI: We all got really really ill with Fairmile belly. 50% of the camp all the time had something wrong with them from food poisoning, but still the dogs licked the plates and everybody lunched out the washing up. So I used to stand up every dinner time and say, "This is the Kitchen Fascist notice board and here we have the food hygiene and safety rules. If you don't follow them, you will DIE!" And then everyone would go, "Shut up. You're putting me off my dinner."

Strangely enough, all protest kitchens always contain the same six items:

- half a sack of green potatoes
- some carrots, a cabbage
- some rice
- some tinned tomatoes
- some red kidney beans which no-one will ever be bothered to cook.

So if you are going to visit a protest camp, don't bring these things. Bring exciting things like vegan cake, pickles, cheese, hummus or filter coffee (essential for night shift).

HYGIENE

Dig a hole and bury your shit.

When you cut yourself, wash the wound in water with a few drops of tea tree or lavender essential oils or commercial disinfectant in and put a bandage on it. A rag boiled for 20 minutes and dried makes a sterile dressing. Cobwebs are good, with natural coagulant and antiseptic properties, but don't get dusty ones with dead bluebottles in.

Blackthorn scratches rapidly turn septic so be extra careful with them.

Try to discourage people from washing their hands in the washing up water to prevent the spread of impetigo.

For nits, get

Hey, look
that's
clean -



plentiful supplies of chemical death nit lotion or try boiled quassia chips, although they don't work for everyone. Cider vinegar helps loosen the eggs if you can get a Napp comb through your locks; a swift hair cut works very well if you can't. Bergamot, lavender, rosemary, geranium and eucalyptus essential oils all repel further head lice invasions once you have got rid of them, but what with the cider vinegar you do end up smelling like a salad dressing.

Scabies looks like an intensely itchy rash of small red pinpoint spots. Most doctors can't diagnose it and it's hell to get rid of. What to do? Immerse yourself in lindane or other nerve poisons? Try alternative therapies, and risk infecting others? I dunno: that's your choice. In the meantime, tell everybody, machine wash all your clothes and bedding and leave in disgrace.

Try Corsodol mouthwash or a few drops of tincture of myrrh for gingivitis, and be careful who you snog.



COOKING FIRES

The fire pit is the natural centre of the camp. Don't cook on fires made from treated wood, i.e. pallets, fence posts or furniture. Never burn elder, laburnum, rhododendron or laurel on open fires; the smoke from these is poisonous only use them in efficient, unsmoky wood burners. Seasoned hard woods give off more heat than crappy pine, also, ash and hazel burn green - useful to know if you're living in the middle of a chainsaw massacre.

A billhook or machete is essential for splitting wet kindling very finely, so it will burn. However don't be caught with it in your hand when police storm the camp.

How to build a treehouse

You will need: hammer, nails, saw, a canvas tarpaulin for a house that will be lived in, or plastic sheeting for a temporary summer affair. Also, for winter, a burner (this one has been welded from a gas bottle) with a length of pipe for chimney and some aluminium or steel sheeting.

joists, pallets or planks for flooring
polypropylene rope for lashing, at least 4 mm thick
bender poles, that is, coppiced hazel or willow shoots (or any wood that bends) best cut in autumn or winter to avoid damaging the tree.
carpet and underlay or flattened cardboard boxes for insulation
wide gauge bit brace or sharp chisel.

You will also need a long rope for hauling things up, some one on the ground to help, and a tree.

1. Climb the tree. You cannot see the structure from the ground.
2. Find a place where your joists can be tied that is approximately level. Joists may also be suspended. Use strong 8mm rope for this.
3. Lash more joists across.
4. Split the pallets and nail the boards across the joists.
5. Now nail in the bender poles and skillfully weave them into an organic whole. Or heat and use string and gaffa tape.
6. Drill or chisel holes in the edge of the platform. Trim the fat ends of the bender poles to fit the holes.

To lash things together: wrap the rope around the branches as shown and then back around the join to pull it tight. Do this a lot on main weight bearing joists. Finish off with a row of half hitches. Don't forget to melt or tape the ends of the rope to prevent fraying.

Fit underlay and carpet. Move in.

Make sure anything near the burner is fireproof.

A hat on top of the stack pipe stops the wind blowing back.

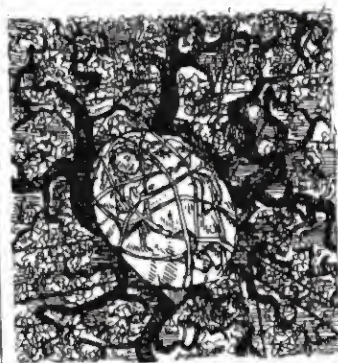
It is a good idea to tie a length of rope to your saw and hammer tie them to the tree.

Definitely time to go have a cup of tea.

Drape the tarpaulin over. Tie it on.



The Beech at Fairmile had a kind of three storey affair.



Mark's treehouse, or the Kinky treehouse at Selar was so small that you couldn't sit up in it. It was like sleeping in an egg.

NUTTERS

You will eventually find a few of these around the camp fire. I don't know how they get there, but they do.
MELSKI: You've got enough on your plate as it is, but then you've got to welcome people in, or turn them away if that's what you need to do. Because there's always a high proportion of wing nuts and fruitcakes, dime bars and spanners. It's always different with every person, and once you're personally involved with that person it's very difficult to say, "Right, they've got to be sectioned" or, "We've got to just turn them out"... and then the police turn up and say, "They were throwing themselves in front of traffic as a form of protest. Take them back", and we're going, "No, no, no, we don't want them here."

Protest camps don't really function well as the last post of care-in-the-community. While some nutters are gentle and lovely, if anyone is being genuinely disruptive, threatening or violent then it's a very good idea to get together and put them on a train to somewhere else before the pressures they put on the community forces others to leave. This is a particular problem in urban camps or community squats. You may have to refuse to operate an open door policy, otherwise nutters and gangsters end up in the majority, and then you're fucked.



Ejecting nutters is the only time I've known camps to have meetings about anything effective or decisive. *Road Rage* recommends plenty of meetings and decision making structures to ensure that all decisions are communal and camps are non hierarchical, which seems a bit unnecessary to me. Official meetings tend to reinforce, rather than challenge the hierarchies which spring up on site, and while it is good to get together to hear what everyone has to say, is also important to stay spontaneous, unstructured and free of rigid bureaucracy.

LOCK-ONS

The illustration shows yer basic oil drum lock-on. Build lock-ons in chimney pots, hollowed out tree stumps, holes in the ground (with buried scaff poles anchoring them in place), in trees, in tunnels, EVERYWHERE. Then try and find people who will commit themselves to being drilled out of them.

The idea is that the evicting bailiffs have to angle grind through the metal, kango hammer through the concrete and then pick out all the other little bits by hand to get to the tube to cut the strap that's attached to your wrist.

Of course, the other way they can get you out is to torture you until you unclip. They have been known to send a little camera down the tube to check whether you really are handcuffed, and then apply extreme pressure if you are not. Foil this by smearing grease around the inside of the tube and shoving some rags or newspaper down to obscure their view.

Lock-ons should be made weeks ahead of time, as the concrete needs time to go off. I asked Stig what the best concrete mix is because she's built loads:

SNAKE: Um, four parts stone, four parts sand, two parts cement.

STIG: Nah, I think it's best to do five parts stone, two parts sand and two or three parts cement.

SNAKE: We've used 16 big stone, 16 small stone, seven sand and four cement before.

STIG: John reckons one cement to at least four parts stone and one sand maybe. Sounds a bit dodgy but if you've got months for it to set then maybe it's OK.

I hope that clears that up.

More usefully, Dave Troll says 1 part cement, 6

parts fine, clean sand, and one part clean gravel - 10ml chipping. Get the sand and stone from builder's merchants and wash any other lumps of metal, ceramic, glass or quartz that you chuck in. Mix the dry ingredients for the concrete, then add clean water and keep stirring all the time. Washing up liquid strengthens the mix.

Alternatively, you could get some money together and get Readymix to deliver some extra tough stuff. Why not make all the lock-ons first in someone's garage, using power tools, and then turn up, install them and fill with concrete? All you need then is a slap up meal and you have an instant Trollheim.

STIG: With our lock-on they looked at it and said,

"That's crap concrete" and started digging through it. Five hours later we were like, "So what do you think of our concrete now?"

CARE OF YOUR LOCK-ON

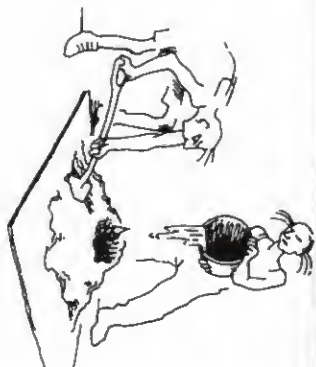
Check that the lock-on is comfortable for you: FP3 recommends padding the top of the tube. Sort out your stash and keep the tube covered so it doesn't collect water.

Don't lock on until the very last minute and try to go to the loo first. Use your left arm, if you are right handed, and since you are in a vulnerable position, wear a silly outfit and keep it fluffy.

BARRICADING HOUSES

Take the stairs out. Nail lots of bits of tin and wood to everything. Reinforce this with concrete. Fill up spaces with anything else available.

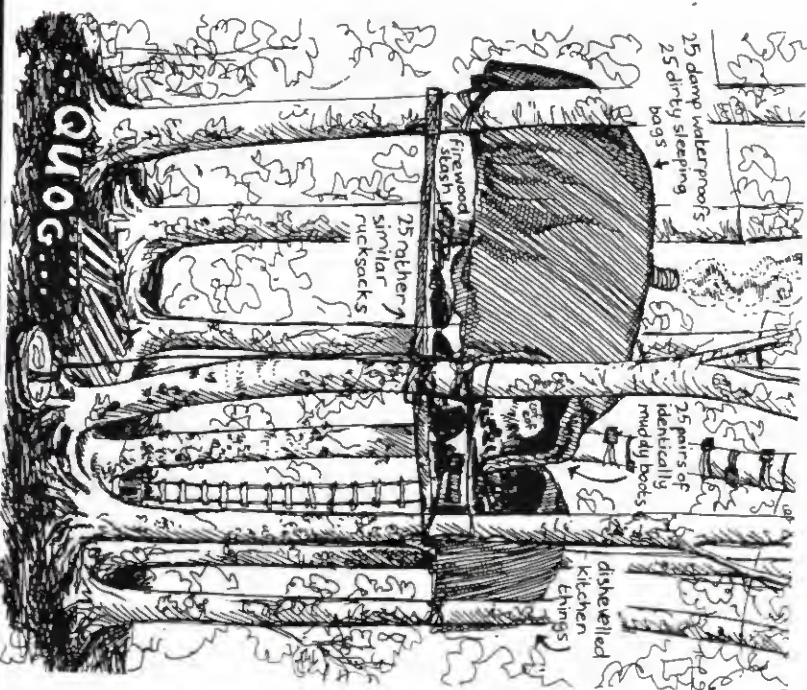
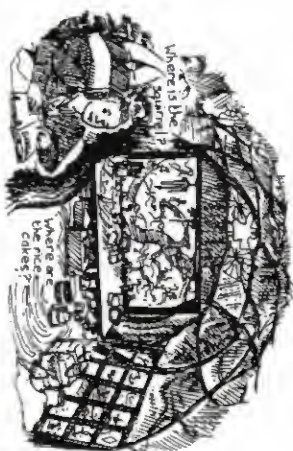
BRIAN: [At Claremont] the whole point was nothing was done to a plan. At one point a couple of guys sat down and designed a plan for doing the bay windows of the houses. Then they realised, "Hang on, this is a bad idea. If we do them all the same they'll find a weak point, and they'll go for that all the time. If we do them all different, they have to figure it out each time.



PICTURES BY B. DAHL

Funky Treehouses I Have Known.

Hattie's treehouse had beautiful windows, Special Branch that went through it (all shiny with being leant on) and a Mystery Squirrel



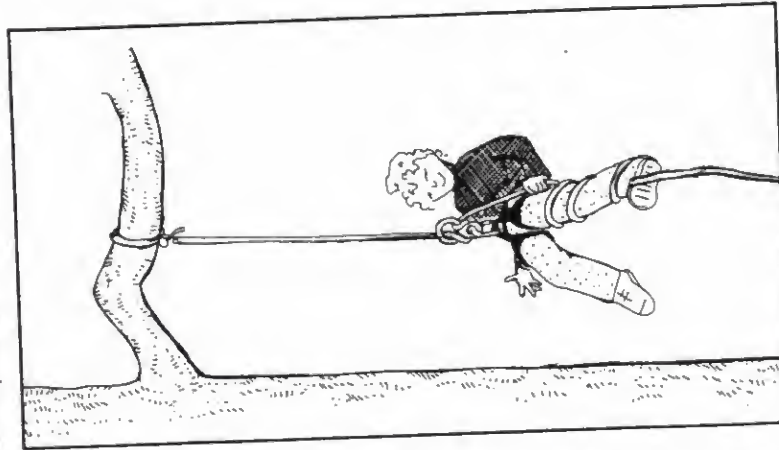
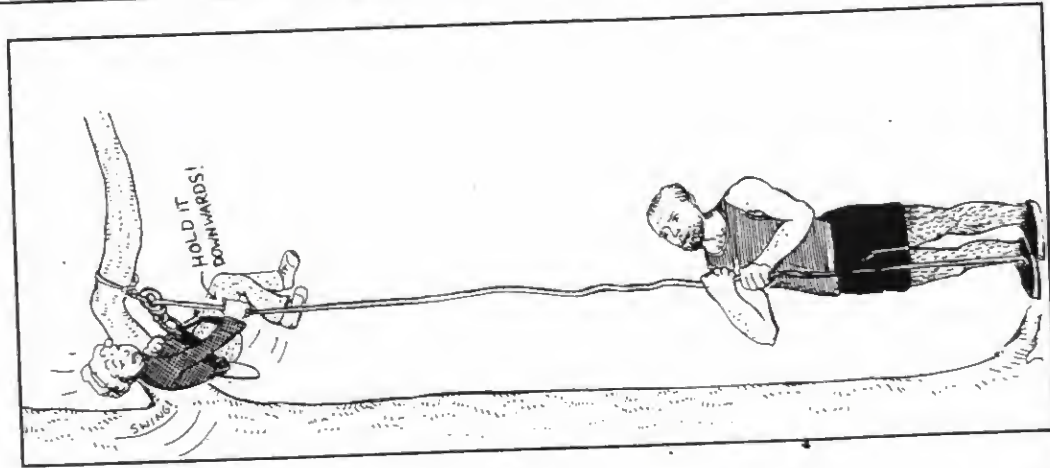
The Mothership at Kennet Camp, Newbury, was built between eight slender trees.

It slept anything up to 30 people and had a little kitchen and a very smoky burner.

9. You can stop by wrapping the rope twice around your leg.

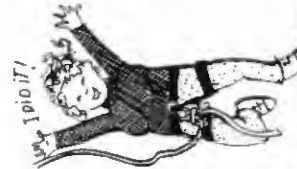
7. Move the fig 8 as far up the rope as you can. Tuck all your hair and necklaces in again and grip the rope firmly downwards.

Now swing out on the rope (this is the scary bit) and slowly and gracefully descend.

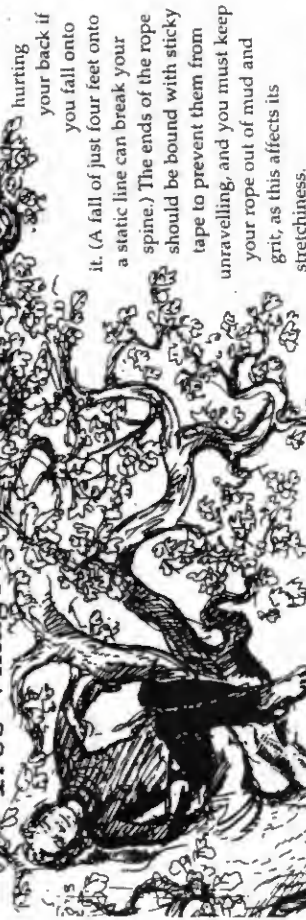


Right, now you're in the trees (although you've been taught by an experienced climber rather than relying on this book, I hope).

Now to build the tree village. This consists of treehouses to live in, and walkways to get around, with maybe the odd steel cable walkway or big net and lots of lock-ons for added defence.



Tree Villages



Warning:

Tree villages are inherently unsafe. The whole point, at Whitecroft, and later at Stanworth, was to create something that evicting bailiffs wouldn't trust. Fantastical structures.

A Canadian friend who lived on the Clayoquot Sound protest in British Columbia was taught far more uncompromising safety measures than we practise in Britain: get your own harness and your own climbing rope, rig it up yourself and never trust anyone else's. With anything other than this, you are risking life and limb.

So the following information is written to show you how we did it, not necessarily how it should be done.

GET THE RIGHT ROPE

Climbing ropes are expensive, woven, brightly coloured things that you get from climbing shops. They are essential for prusiking, abseiling or for clipping onto

when climbing, as the 'give' in the rope stops you

hurting your back if you fall onto it. (A fall of just four feet onto a static line can break your spine.) The ends of the rope should be bound with sticky tape to prevent them from unravelling, and you must keep your rope out of mud and grit, as this affects its stretchiness.

Blue polypropylene rope has traditionally been used for both treehouse building and walkways, because it is cheap. It is strong, but it biodegrades in sunlight so must be replaced over time. It can be obtained from builders merchants and ships chandlers. For treehouses, use 6mm polyprop for lashings and 8mm for anything else. For walkways, it is advisable to try to get hold of **polysteel rope** (white with red flecks in) which has steel woven into it for extra strength. With walkways it is very, very important that the rope doesn't break.

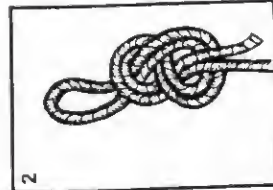
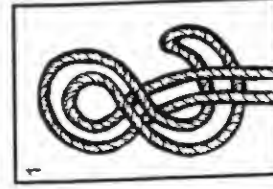
Rope unravels when cut, so bind cut ends tightly with electrical tape, or melt them with a lighter and mash the fibres together.

TIE THE RIGHT KNOTS

This is extremely important - you can't just make it up as you go along.

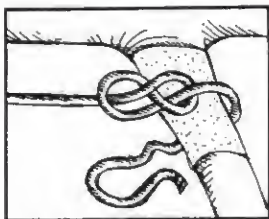
Figure eight knot:

This is a strong, easy knot.



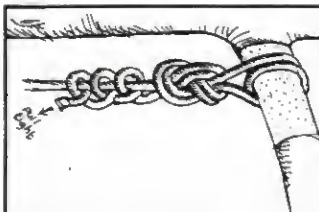
(Figure eight knot cont.) Rigging a climbing rope up in a tree:

Find a strong, accessible branch. The half a figure of eight a few metres from one end of your climbing rope. (If the rope is going to be up for a while, you may want to tape some carpet tightly around the branch to protect the tree).



Wrap the rope once around the tree, then feed it back through the knot. Finish off with a line of half hitches or if you want to be flash, fisherman's knot, (below). Tape the ends of the rope together.

Your climbing rope must reach all the way to the ground. If it is a too long, tie the excess up in a knot so it doesn't trail in the mud.



Alpine butterfly:
This is a bit more complicated. It forms a loop, like a figure of eight, but you can untie it more easily. Use it to make loops in a length of climbing rope to provide clip-on points for clambering about in trees.

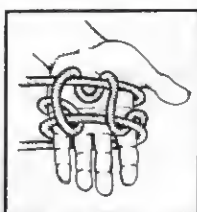


Wrap the rope three times around your hand.

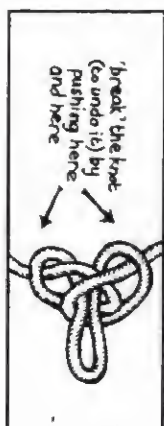


Pass the second strand under the third one and around in front of both.

then slide it behind them, down your fingers and off your hand.



Try again until you end up with something that looks like this.



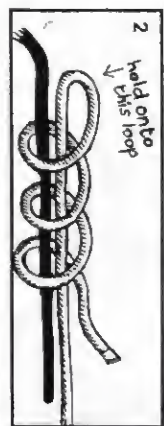
Half hitches:



Easy peasy. Tie them all in the same direction.

Fisherman's knot:

Very swanky. Use this to tie the ends of a length of prusik cord together to make prusik loops. It can also be used in an emergency to tie any two pieces of rope together. (Splicing is a safer method of joining rope - refer to your Boy Scout Manual for details).

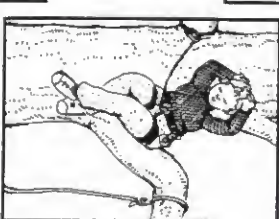


Abselling

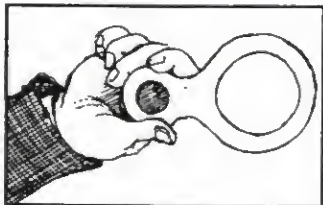
Great fun. Although bear in mind that abselling has caused more serious injuries on tree campaigns than anything else. Really, I mean it, get someone to teach you properly. Anyway, this is how you absell with a figure eight.



1. Find a climbing rope that is firmly attached to a tree and which reaches all the way to the ground.



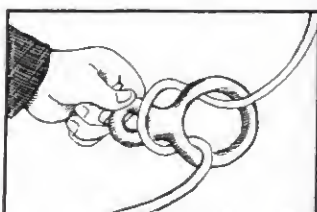
2. Tie your hair up and tuck your necklaces in.



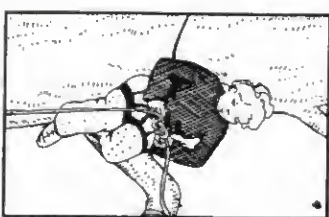
3. Unclick your fig 8 and hold it this way up.



4. With the rope in your right hand, if you are right handed, push it through the large hole from the front.



5. Pull the loop of rope around the bottom of the figure 8.



6. Attach the bottom of the fig 8 to your main carabiner. Do-up-the-screwgate-and-undo-it-half-a-turn.

Now this allows you to slide, in a controlled fashion, down a rope ONLY provided that you hold the protruding rope DOWNWARDS.

If you let go of the rope then you will fall. If you go too fast, then you may burn your hand, let go of the rope and fall (avoid this by wearing a leather gardening glove).

And if you have any stray locks of hair or necklace type things near the fig 8 then they will be magically sucked into it and make you very unhappy.

SO the first time you absell, it is as well to get someone to hold the bottom of the rope, slackly, so that if you yell, they can pull it downwards and slow you down. You can also try passing the rope under your bottom and holding it with your other hand, or wrapping it loosely around your lower leg and gripping it between your boots. Don't hold onto the rope above the fig 8.

Got that? Ready?

CLIMBING UP TREES WITHOUT BRANCHES

Strong people like boys can usually shimmy up tree trunks if they hold onto them tightly enough, but this is a cheat method for wussy girlyies, like me. These methods only work for trunks which are narrow enough for a person to reach around.

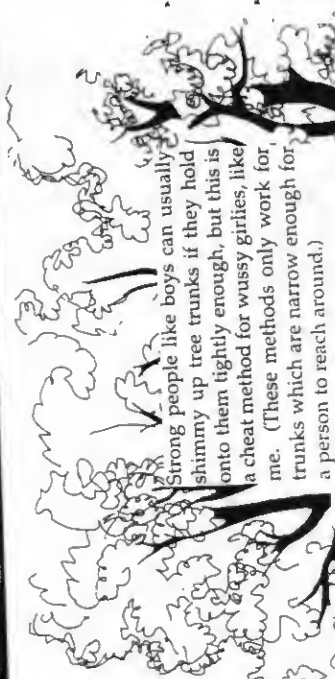
1. Wrap a long tape around the trunk of the tree and thread through itself, then clip onto a small carabiner and clip this onto your main carabiner.

2. Wrap another long tape around and put your foot in the loop up. Move the waist loop up. Sit down. Move the foot loop up.

4. If you come to a branch sticking out, wrap a third tape with a carabiner on around the trunk above the branch and clip this onto your main carabiner. Unclick your other waist tape and carry on up.

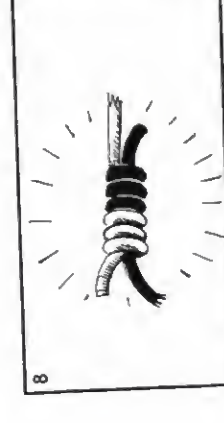
CLIMBING DOWN TREES WITHOUT BRANCHES

Hug round the trunk with your arms and legs and cross your feet. Slither down, breaking all the little twigs off on the way. This wrecks your clothes (but what are you doing with decent clothing on a protest campaign anyway?)



CLIMBING DOWN TREES WITHOUT BRANCHES

Hug round the trunk with your arms and legs and cross your feet. Slither down, breaking all the little twigs off on the way. This wrecks your clothes (but what are you doing with decent clothing on a protest campaign anyway?)



Tape knot:

For making a loop out of a length of climbing tape.



There is another knot to learn, the Clove hitch, which is illustrated in the 'Making Walkways' section. Practise tying knots with your shoelaces; it's easier than trying with polysteel rope.

Your Harness is the Swankiest thing about Roads Protesting

It is also what stops you falling out of a tree. Make sure yours is safe and fitted correctly and that other people's are too. Buy proper climbing equipment from climbing specialist shops (if you explain that you are saving the planet they may give you a discount - we nearly got a sponsorship deal at Newbury). All this information is intended as a guide. Don't rely on it.

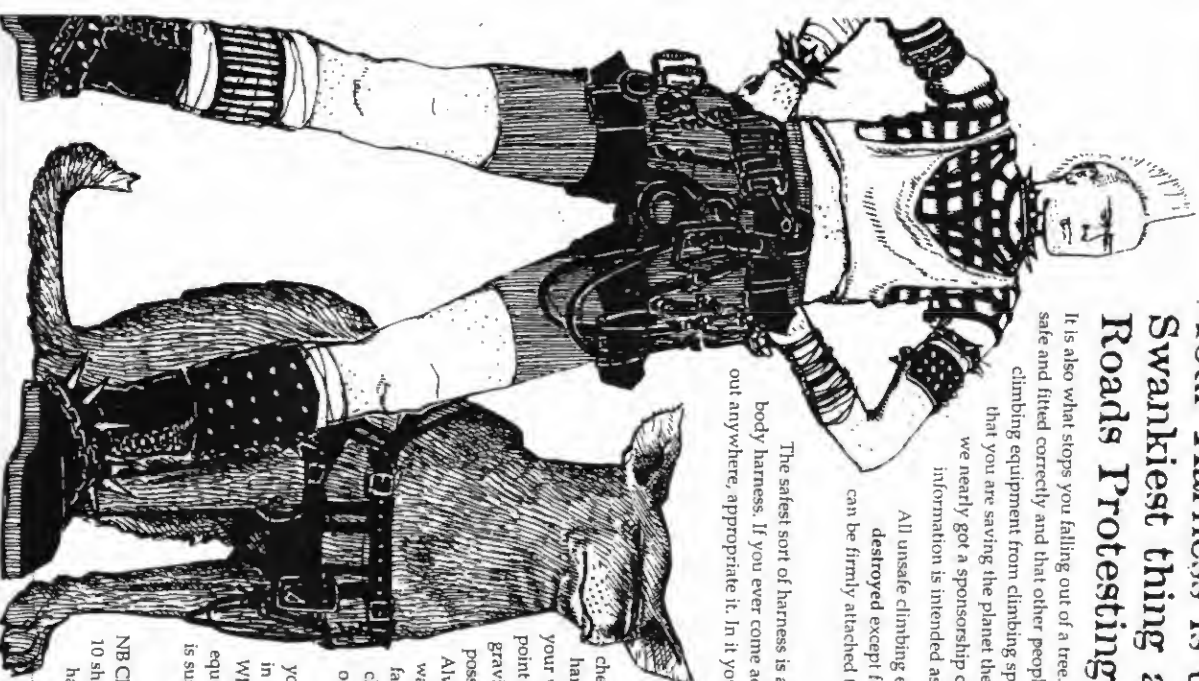
All unsafe climbing equipment must be destroyed except for old carabiner clips which can be firmly attached to lock-ons.

The safest sort of harness is a full body harness. If you ever come across one of these lunched out anywhere, appropriate it. In it you can do fun things like abseiling upside down.

However, for tree protesty things, a sit harness is adequate, and cheaper. When you are hanging about in one of these, your weight is suspended at a point below your centre of gravity, which means it is possible to turn upside down. Always make sure that the waist band is tightly fastened, so there is no chance that you can slip out of it.

The first time you try on your harness, get the person in the shop to show you how. When assembling your equipment, get someone who is suited to check that it is safe.

NB Children under the age of 10 should only use a full body harness.



Climbing Trees

This is very simple, just put one foot above the other. Go on, explore that fear of heights.

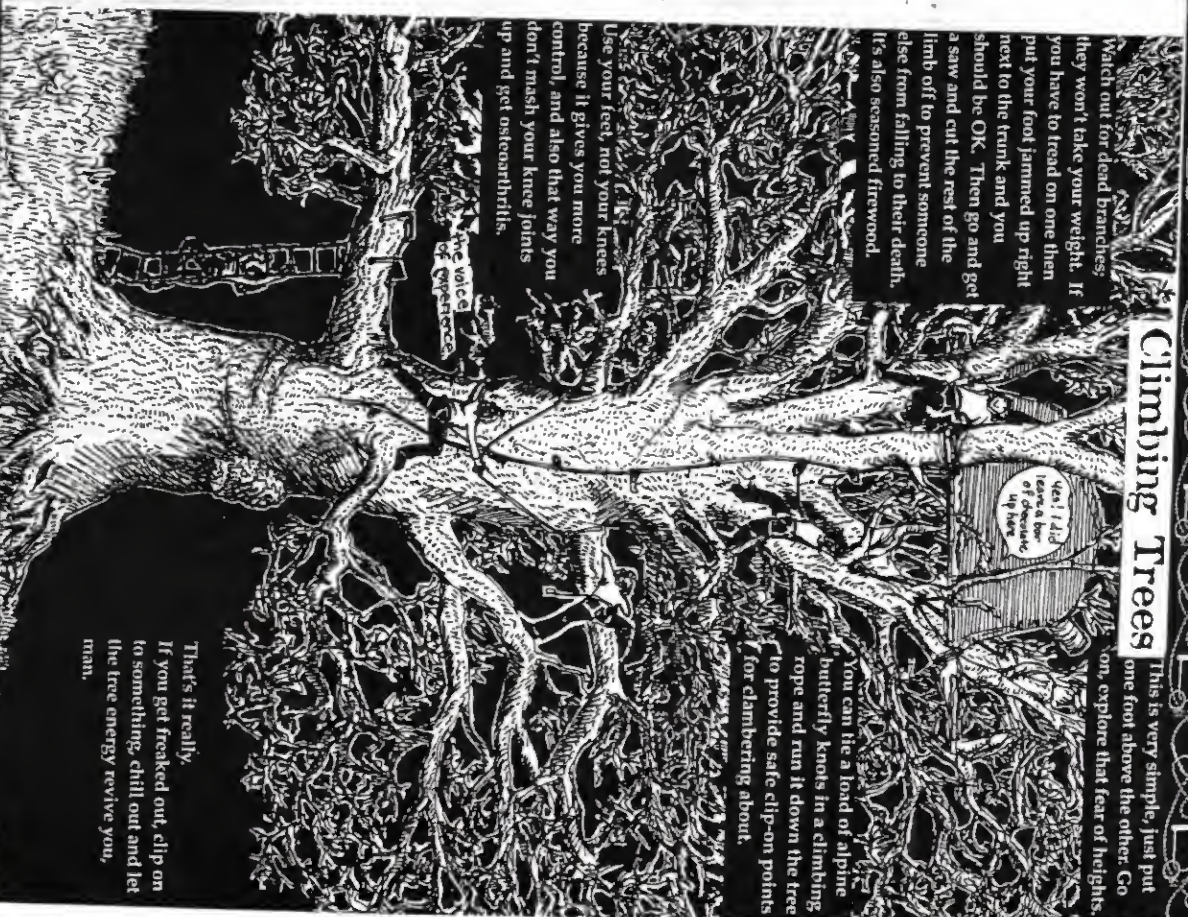
Watch out for dead branches; they won't take your weight. If you have to tread on one then put your foot jammed up right next to the trunk and you should be OK. Then go and get a saw and cut the rest of the limb off to prevent someone else from falling to their death. It's also seasoned firewood.

You can tie a load of alpine butterfly knots in a climbing rope and run it down the tree to provide safe clip-on points for clambering about.

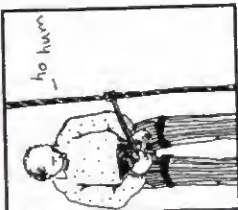
Use your feet, not your knees because it gives you more control, and also that way you don't mash your knee joints up and get osteoarthritis.

The voice of experience

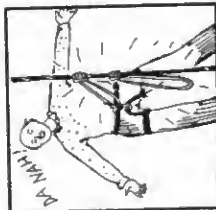
That's it really. If you get freaked out, clip on to something, chill out and let the tree energy revive you, man.



5. Your prusik will slide up the rope, but once you put any weight on it, it will tighten and won't slip down, much. Attach the rest of the loop to your main carabiner, do-up-the-screwgate-and-undo-it-half-a-turn.



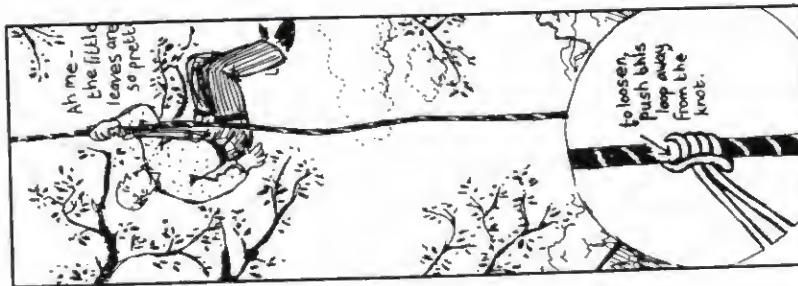
6. Repeat with the larger prusik, underneath the first. This is to put your foot in.



7. How it works is you stand in the foot loop and then slide the waist loop up the rope...



...then you sit down in your harness and slide the foot loop up.



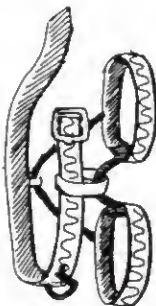
When you get tired you can stop and chill out and swing about. You have to take all your weight off the prusik and loosen the knot slightly to get it to move. If the knots slide down the rope, which may happen if the climbing rope is thin or new, then retie your prusik knots wrapping the prusik three times around the rope.

Prusiking is great when you are too tired or out of it to free climb. I know someone who woke up still swinging in their prusiks after a nasty lot of drinking the night before. Prusiking is crap in icy rain, when the knots freeze to the rope and you have to retie them in mid air. However, it is so exhausting that at least you will be warm when you get into bed.

WHAT YOUR HARNESS WILL LOOK LIKE



Unclip all the metal bits of tat and untangle and rethread the various belts and elasticky bits until your harness looks like this:



a normal sit harness. These come in different sizes.



or this, a DMM style adjustable harness. These harnesses are not very comfortable for girls, but then no harnesses are comfortable for boys, with their squashable dangly bits (hee hee). Now put it on like a pair of knickers. Do the waist band up tightly, around your waist, not your hips, and adjust the leg loops (if possible) so they are snug.

VERY IMPORTANT

Now check that all the buckles are doubled back on themselves so they cannot slip.



Always always always always always always always always

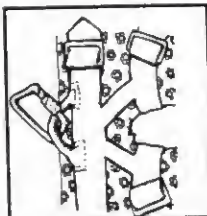
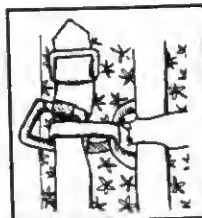
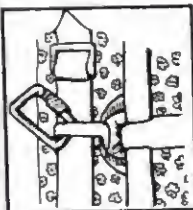


always always always always always always always always

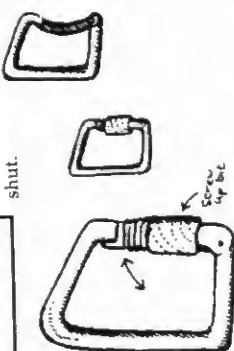


CARABINERS

Now for the rest of the climbing tat. First a large (seven ton) screwgate carabiner attaches to the front of your harness, just above your rube bits. Floral leggings strictly optional.



A carabiner is a specially designed clip. It should open and close freely and show no signs of wear. Screwgate carabiners have a screw attachment which does up over the opening. This should be twisted upwards and then undone half a turn, to prevent it from jamming shut.



COWSTAILS

The next essential bit of climbing tat is made from a few metres of climbing rope and two carabiners (next page). It must be taken your weight in a fall and must 'give' slightly so as not to break your back. Wrap the long cowstail around a branch for



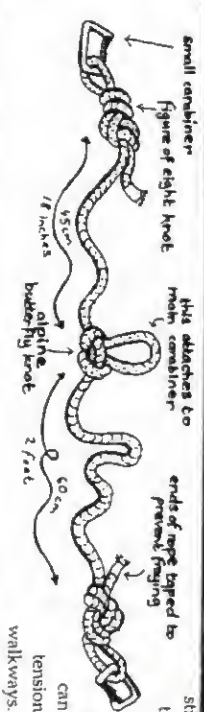
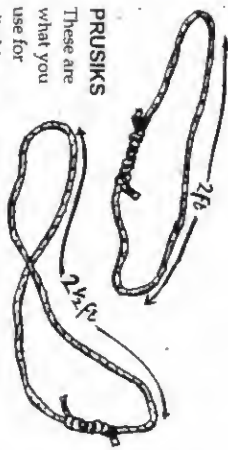


FIGURE EIGHTS

These are for abseiling, which is wicked. They come in lots of different colours and shapes and hang off the main carabiner on the harness like some kind of penis substitute. Figure eights need to be very strong to withstand the friction of abseiling, and it is possible for them to fracture internally without it showing on the surface so never drop your figure of eight, (or any climbing equipment) on to a hard surface. If a fall does occur, test your figure of eight by suspending it from a string and tapping it with a bit of metal – it should chime, 'ting' – if it makes a dull 'thunk' it could be broken and might shatter when you abseil on it. Actually, that sounds a bit dodgy. Look, you don't want your fig 8 to explode in mid air, so just don't drop it, OK?

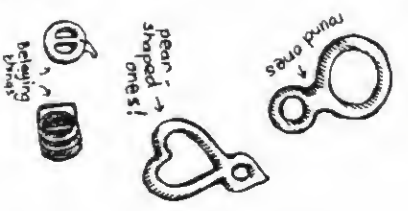


ASCENDERS

These are also used for climbing up ropes, apparently with less effort than prusiking, but I've never had any because they are so expensive. Some ascenders are intended as a secondary back-up in rock climbing and should not solely bear your weight – ask about them in the climbing shop. Some ascenders have little teeth in them which will make your climbing rope go all furry over time. They are



still worth buying, though, if you feel rich, because you can shin up ropes quickly with them and you can also use them to tension ropes when making walkways.



PULLEYS

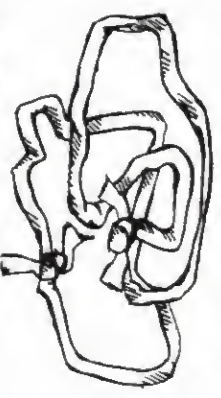
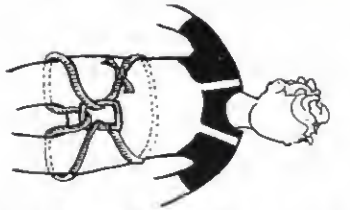
Climbing shops also sell little strong pulleys which you can use to rig up a block and tackle to get people or tat into the trees. Some boy protesters buy them and then get enthusiastic about the possibility of whizzing along walkways on them like Superman, but this is not actually very practical, as in an eviction you are not likely to want



to hassle about with putting one on a rope and then threading the carabiner through it. Really they are just for having a swankily laden harness.

TAPES

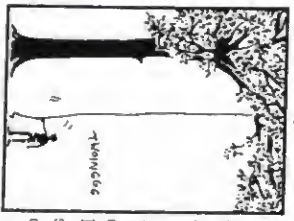
Now these are useful. These are just loops of special fabric tied with a tape knot (see 'Knots'). A tape can be wrapped around a branch like an extra long cowstail, or to make a foot loop. You can use a tape and two extra carabiners to make a chest harness for extra safety, useful for occasions like getting your mother up to your tree house. And you can make a temporary sit harness out of a long tape and one large carabiner, adjust the knot in the tape so it is the right length to fit snugly. This is obviously dodgy, but a lot better than nothing at all. Tapes are also used for shining up tree trunks, and for climbing lampposts during riots.



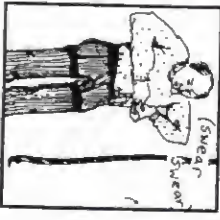
You are now a fully kitted out Ego-Warrior. All you need to complete the image is an inexhaustible supply of anecdotes detailing the vital role you have played in the Direct Action Movement over the last few years. But remember, no matter how beautiful and valuable your harness is to you, NEVER, on pain of severe ridicule, NEVER EVER WEAR YOUR HARNESS TO THE PUB.

Prusiking

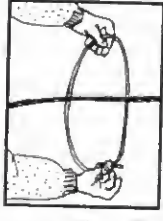
Prusiking is the safest way to climb trees, and it doesn't damage the bark or branches. As you are attached to the rope the whole time, it also makes it easier to overcome a fear of heights.



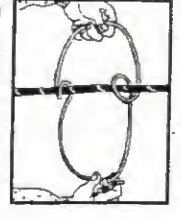
1. Check that you are climbing a climbing rope. It should be woven, stretchy and a funky colour.



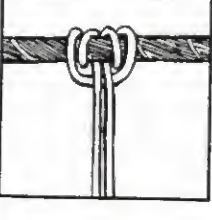
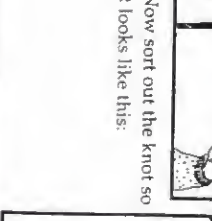
2. Untangle your prusiks. Is the top of it firmly attached to the tree?



3. Take the smaller of the two loops and hold it out behind the rope, with the knot in your right hand if you are right-handed. Pass the knot around in front of the rope and back through itself.



4. Pass the rope around and through again, and pull it tight...



Now sort out the knot so it looks like this: